

# URGENT ACTION

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12 February 2007

**Further Information on UA 02/07 (04 January 2007) and follow-ups (15 January 2007; 02 February 2007) - Imminent execution/possible death sentence**

**IRAQ                      Taha Yassin Ramadhan (m)**

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Former Iraqi vice-president Taha Yassin Ramadhan was sentenced to death on 12 February by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT). The case will be referred back to the SICT's Appeals Chamber. However, since it was the Appeals Chamber that requested his previous sentence of life imprisonment to be increased, he is at risk of being executed within 30 days.

Taha Yassin Ramadhan received a life sentence on 5 November in connection with the execution of 148 people from the village of al-Dujail, north of Baghdad, after a failed attempt to assassinate the then president, Saddam Hussain, in 1982. However, on 26 December the SICT's Appeals Chamber referred the case back to the court, requesting a harsher sentence. According to the SICT's statute, death sentences have to be carried out within 30 days and those sentenced to death cannot be pardoned by the president.

Two of Taha Yassin Ramadhan's co-defendants, former Iraqi officials Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti and 'Awad Hamad al-Bandar, were hanged on 15 January. The third, Saddam Hussain, had been hanged on 30 December.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the reintroduction of the death penalty in Iraq in August 2004, scores of people have been sentenced to death and there has been a rapid rise in the number of executions, with at least 65 people put to death in 2006 alone, many of them after trials which may have been unfair.

On 11 February 2007 the Iraqi authorities announced that 14 people had been executed in "recent weeks" for murder, rape and kidnapping. Among them were Thanun Yunis Salim, reportedly for his involvement of the killing of 65 people, and Ahmad Hamad Hassan, who reportedly confessed to the bombing of a mosque in Babil province, south of Baghdad, which left 65 people dead. No further details are available.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern that Taha Yassin Ramadhan has been sentenced to death and is at risk of being executed within 30 days;
- expressing concern that the proceedings against him at the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal failed to meet international fair trial standards;
- urging the authorities to have Taha Yassin Ramadhan retried in accordance with international fair trial standards;
- urging the authorities to commute his death sentence;
- urging them to ensure that all trials before the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal are fair, and that the court will no longer have recourse to the death penalty.

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*Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.*

**APPEALS TO:**

(In addition to sending direct appeals to the email addresses that are available below, please also send appeals via the Iraqi embassy listed below, asking them to forward your appeals to these officials. Thanks!)

**President:**

Jalal Talabani

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Prime Minister:**

Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Minister of Justice:**

Hashim al-Shibli

**E-mail:** [minister@iraqi-justice.org](mailto:minister@iraqi-justice.org)

[deputy@iraqi-justice.org](mailto:deputy@iraqi-justice.org)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Minister of Foreign Affairs:**

Hoshyar Zebari

**Email:** [press@iraqmofa.net](mailto:press@iraqmofa.net)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

**(Please also ask them to send copies to the Human Rights Minister, Wajdan Mikhail.)**

His Excellency Samir Sumaida'ie

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Washington DC 20036

**Email:** [amboffice@iraqiembassy.org](mailto:amboffice@iraqiembassy.org)

**Fax:** 1 202 462 5066

**Phone:** 1 202 483 7500

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the AISUA Urgent Action office, if sending appeals after 26 March 2007.**

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**Tip of the Month** 

-- How to Make Your Urgent Action Letter Writing More Effective --

**Stay inspired, because letter writing works!** Upon his recent release from prison in Turkmenistan, the wife of environmental defender Andrei Zatoka declared: *"We won! Andrei is free!"* For more success stories to keep you inspired or to share with friends, visit [amnestyusa.org/success](http://amnestyusa.org/success) or contact the UA office.

*February 2007*